

## ***Fifth and Sixth Grade Curriculum Guide 2008-2009***

### **5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Humanities: The Ancient and Medieval World**

Over a two year sequence, students in the fifth and sixth grade humanities program study the ancient and medieval history of Europe and the non-western world and read relevant literature, including historical novels, myths and legends, renditions of ancient and medieval texts, and texts that build on ancient themes, myths, and traditions. Students additionally read a selection of modern works designed to introduce literary concepts and develop analytic skills appropriate to the fifth and sixth grade reader. The course includes extensive reading, intensive writing instruction, and instruction in skills relevant to the study of both history and English, including vocabulary, grammar, spelling, study skills, and research strategies.

**B Year:** The focus of the B Year, including 2008-2009, is the classical and medieval history of Western Europe. Using the *Early Times* series and supporting literature, the class studies Ancient Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The class examines the social, political and economic structures and practices in each of these periods, as well as the cultural legacies and influences on the world we live in today. Guiding questions for the course include: Why did certain civilizations thrive or decline at given periods? How did geography and climate affect the civilizations? How did the people live? How did they govern? How did they interact with other civilizations? What did they believe in, and how were their daily lives affected by their beliefs? And finally, why do we study these civilizations? Why does it matter, and how can this study help us understand the world we live in? Students conduct research projects of their choice for each period studied, craft their own myth or legend, and design their own civilization in the spring. Supporting literature providing an expanded perspective into each civilization may include: *D'Aulaire's Greek Mythology*, *Black Ships Before Troy*, *The Hero and the Crown*, *The Thief*, *Catherine Called Birdie*, biographies of influential Renaissance figures, and selections of poetry, short stories, and adapted Shakespeare plays. Additional readings include modern literature that builds on ancient myths and legends.

**A Year:** The focus of the A year is non-western world history and cultures. Using the *Early Times* series, *World Explorer* textbook, and supporting literature, the class studies ancient and medieval civilizations in China, the Near East, South Asia, Africa and Latin America. The class examines the social, political, and economic structures and practices in each of these periods, as well as the cultural legacies and influences on the world we live in today. They also investigate the regional geography and cultural practices of each area. Guiding questions for the course include: Why did certain civilizations thrive or decline at given periods? How did geography and climate affect the civilizations? How did the people live? How did they govern? How did they interact with other civilizations? What did they believe in, and how were their daily lives affected by their beliefs? And finally, why do we study these civilizations? Why does it matter, and how can this study help us understand the world we live in? Students investigate through research and study places different from their own experience and draw connections to